

Legal history of fingerprinting requirements for education

- 1997 – Part of Governor Carnahan’s Safe Schools Initiative
Governor Carnahan issued Executive Order 97-16 instructing DESE to develop procedures to find, share, and investigate the conduct of individuals who seek certification.
- 1998 – House Bill 1469
The Bill prompted a change in RSMo 168.021 that required a background check for people licensed in another state who were seeking certification in Missouri.
- 1999 – Open records check
In March of 1999, the State Board of Education responded to that change with an emergency rule. During this period, an annual “open records check” on all practicing teachers in public schools was conducted annually, free of charge, by the Missouri Highway Patrol and individuals with offenses were investigated.
- 2000 – Code of State Regulations 5 CSR 80-800.200
This was changed to require ALL applicants for licensure to complete a fingerprint background check. This rule became effective November 30, 2000.
- 2003 – Code of State Regulations 5 CSR 80-800.290
Application for Substitute Certificate of License to Teach was amended to require fingerprints for all new applicants. This also established an Internet process for applications. At this time, the Highway Patrol no longer provided the annual “open records check” on our educators.
- 2005 – House Bill 1453
A comprehensive bill directed at foster care, included language requiring school employees who have contact with pupils to have criminal background checks. This included janitors, cooks, administrators, as well as teachers. Bus drivers were assigned to the Department of Revenue; however, the following year that was changed and DESE assumed bus drivers’ background checks, also.
- 2007 – Open records check reinstated with assistance from the Missouri Highway Patrol

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education works closely with the Missouri Highway Patrol, FBI, numerous state agencies and public schools in capturing electronic fingerprints and in sharing appropriate and confidential information needed to protect Missouri’s children.